

IN THE CLAIMS:

1-10. (canceled)

11. (currently amended) A rotor blade installation tool for coupling a plurality of rotor blades to a rotor disc wherein each rotor blade extends from the rotor disc to a radially outer blade tip, said tool comprising:

a blade engagement end configured to engage the plurality of rotor blades between the rotor disc and the radially outer blade tip, said blade engagement end comprising an engagement top surface;

at least one brace coupled to said blade engagement end at a first end of said at least one brace;

at least one handle coupled to said at least one brace at a predetermined angle to facilitate inducing an axial force to the plurality of rotor blades; and

a guide end coupled to a second end of said at least one brace, said guide end comprising ~~a body including~~ a guide end top surface positioned above said engagement top surface and a guide end opening extending therethrough, said at least one handle extending from said at least one brace between said brace first end and said brace second end.

12. (original) A tool in accordance with Claim 11 wherein said blade engagement end comprises a circular cross-section.

13. (currently amended) A tool in accordance with Claim 11 wherein each of the plurality of rotor blades being coupled to the rotor disc using said tool extends radially between a dovetail and a mid-span damper, said blade engagement end comprises ~~a body including a central opening extending therethrough, said body comprising~~ an engagement face configured to contact each of the plurality of blades between the dovetails and the mid-span dampers during a blade installation process.

14. (original) A tool in accordance with Claim 13 wherein said engagement face comprises a pad coupled to said engagement face.

15. (original) A tool in accordance with Claim 14 wherein said plurality of blades are fabricated from a material having a first hardness number, said pad is fabricated from a material having a second hardness number, said first hardness number is greater than said second hardness number.

16. (original) A tool in accordance with Claim 11 wherein said blade engagement end comprises a first riffled engagement side configured to conform with at least one said plurality of rotor blades.

17. (original) A tool in accordance with Claim 11 wherein said at least one brace is configured to maintain said engagement end and said guide end in alignment during a blade installation process.

18. (currently amended) A tool in accordance with Claim 11 wherein said ~~body blade engagement end~~ further comprises a central opening therethrough, ~~said opening sized to receive a guide shaft therethrough~~ said tool configured to receive a guide shaft therethrough from said central opening through said guide end opening.

19. (currently amended) A tool in accordance with Claim 18 wherein said guide end is configured to slidably coupled couple to ~~said the~~ guide shaft.

20. (previously presented) A tool in accordance with Claim 11 wherein said at least one handle is configured to assist a manual rotation of said tool during an installation process.